

Message Text

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TRSE-00 AID-05 CU-04 /108 W
-----087609 031045Z /16

R 030825Z SEP 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8105
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 TEL AVIV 6613

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: GW, IS
SUBJECT: ISRAEL AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

REF: (A) BONN 13629 (NOTAL), (B) TEL AVIV 6331

SUMMARY: THE KAPPLER AFFAIR, THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW
GERMAN AMBASSADOR, AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DEMARCHE
ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK COMBINE TO POINT
UP ISRAELI SENSITIVITIES TOWARD GERMAN AFFAIRS AND THE
SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND ISRAEL. THE RELATIONSHIP IS
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SPECIAL, AND IS REFERRED TO AS SUCH BY THE ISRAELIS,
IN THAT IT IS NOT ALLOWED TO DEVELOP ALONG NORMAL
LINES DUE TO THE CONSTANT REMINDERS OF THE NAZI PAST
-- A PAST WHICH REQUIRES GERMANY TO OVERCOMPENSATE IN
ITS RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND PERMITS ISRAEL TO BASE
ITS RELATIONS ON PERCEPTIONS OF THE "OLD GERMANY" AS
MUCH AS ON CURRENT GERMAN POLICIES. AT PRESENT, RELATIONS

REMAIN GOOD, BASED ON GERMAN MORAL COMMITMENTS AND ISRAELI PRAGMATIC INTERESTS. AS LONG AS THESE COINCIDE, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT RELATIONS WILL BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY THE CHANGE IN ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OR INCIDENTS WHICH MAY ARISE. END SUMMARY.

1. CURRENT ISRAELI/GERMAN RELATIONS. THE COINCIDENCE OF SEVERAL EVENTS RECENTLY HAS PROVIDED US WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS ISRAELI/FRG RELATIONS WITH GERMAN EMBASSY AND MFA OFFICERS. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FRG AND ISRAEL IS BUTTRESSED BY A COMMUNALITY OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS. ISRAELI FRIENDSHIP SERVES TO COMPENSATE THE GERMAN SENSE OF MORAL OBLIGATION AND PROVIDES THE FRG WITH A MODICUM OF INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE RELATIONSHIP SERVES ISRAELI INTERESTS IN THE FORM OF AID AND TRADE BENEFITS AND IN THE FRG'S MODERATING ROLE WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

2. THREE POINTS CHARACTERIZE CURRENT FRG-ISRAELI RELATIONS ON THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC LEVEL: 1) AN ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE FRG, BASED ON POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL COOPERATION, TO DEFINE A NORMAL RATHER THAN A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP AND TO DECREASE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST; 2) GERMAN EFFORTS WITHIN THE EC TO WORK FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, COUNTERED BY ISRAELI EFFORTS TO LIMIT EUROPE TO AN ECONOMIC ROLE IN THE AREA; AND
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3) A POSITIVE RESPONSE BY THE FRG TO ISRAELI DESIRE FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION.

3. GERMANY HAS LARGELY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ITS EFFORTS TO REDUCE ITS SPECIAL SENSE OF OBLIGATION AND DEFINE A NORMAL RELATIONSHIP. THE GERMAN EMBASSY FEELS THAT A TACIT UNDERSTANDING HAS BEEN REACHED WHICH RECOGNIZES THE GERMAN MORAL COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL BUT AT THE SAME TIME ALLOWS FOR INCREASED LATITUDE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FUTURE GERMAN POLICY WHICH WILL BE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. GERMAN REPRESENTATIVES, NOTING THAT THE GOI NO LONGER OFFICIALLY REFERS TO RELATIONS AS "SPECIAL," FEEL THEIR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL, AND WERE CAPPED BY ALLON'S STATEMENT IN GERMANY IN 1975: "I FEEL MYSELF AMONG FRIENDS." THEY ADD THAT FRIENDS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK FREELY AND TO SAY WHAT THEY FEEL. FOR THE ISRAELIS, HOWEVER, THE PAST IS NOT EASILY FORGOTTEN, AND THE MFA ADMITTED THAT ISRAEL WILL CONTINUE, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT OFFICIALLY, TO INVOKE THE MORAL ("YOU OF ALL PEOPLE") COMMITMENT. WHILE RELATIONS WILL BE SOMEWHAT NORMALIZED, THEY WILL NEVER BE COMPLETELY NORMAL UNTIL THE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST IS ERODED

IN A NEW GENERATION. THESE POINTS WERE MADE IN A JERUSALEM POST EDITORIAL ON AUGUST 30 WHICH SAID: "PERHAPS, INDEED, THERE HAS BEEN SOME LESSENING OF THE ORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP AND SOME GROWTH IN THE SENSE OF 'NORMALCY,' NOTABLY ON THE GERMAN SIDE. WEST GERMANY TODAY, MORE THAN 30 YEARS AFTER THE END OF WWII, TENDS TO FEEL IT HAS AMPLY REPAID ITS DEBT TO HUMANITY, AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE, TOO, AND NEED NO LONGER ACKNOWLEDGE ANY PARTICULAR OBLIGATION TO ISRAEL."

4. THE AREA WITH THE GREATEST POTENTIAL DANGER TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS IS GERMANY'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY, WITH ITS BEARING ON THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL. IN ITS APPROACH TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, THE FRG HAS
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AVOIDED STATING AN INDEPENDENT POLICY AND HAS SHIELDED ITSELF WITHIN THE NINE, WHILE PROVIDING GUIDANCE AND MOVING THE COMMUNITY INTO A POSITION BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES. THE FRG RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR A BALANCED APPROACH IN ORDER TO ATTAIN INFLUENCE WITHIN BOTH CAMPS AND THEREBY TO MAKE ITS OWN VOICE BETTER HEARD. THUS FAR, GERMANY HAS MANAGED TO RESIST ARAB, AND IN PARTICULAR SYRIAN, DEMANDS FOR BOYCOTT PROVISIONS IN INVESTMENT GUARANTEES AND FOR PUBLIC CRITICISM OF ISRAEL. GERMANY CONTINUES TO BACK UN RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338, WITHOUT HEDGING ON RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL OR HER SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS.

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AT THE SAME TIME, BONN HAS MANAGED TO REESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND INITIATE SUBSTANTIAL TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH THE ARAB NATIONS. GERMANY HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN ISRAELI CRITICISM OVER THE DUBLIN AND LONDON PAPERS WHICH CALLED FOR A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AND A PALESTINIAN ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE ALSO HAS DRAWN ISRAELI CHARGES THAT IT IS DEGENERATING INTO POLITICAL DISCUSSION. THESE ARE, HOWEVER, RIPPLES ON THE SURFACE, ACCORDING TO A GERMAN EMBASSY OFFICER, WHO SAID THAT ISRAEL IS AWARE THAT THE FRG CHECKS FRENCH INFLUENCE IN THE EC AND ACTS AS A FRIEND AND ALLY AT A TIME WHEN ISRAEL FINDS ITSELF INCREASINGLY ISOLATED.
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5. IN THE AREA OF MILITARY AFFAIRS, THE FRG HAS ATTEMPTED TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS BY ASSIGNING IN 1976 FOR THE FIRST TIME A MILITARY ATTACHE TO ISRAEL, AND BY ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM OF MILITARY SALES AND PURCHASES. THE EXCHANGE OF MILITARY ATTACHES FACILITATES AN UNKNOWN, BUT NOT UNIMPORTANT (FOR ISRAEL) AMOUNT OF MILITARY SALES, AND ALLOWS THE FRG TO SHOW THE FLAG WHILE KEEPING ABREAST OF ISRAELI MILITARY DOCTRINE AND THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ONE FRG EMBASSY SOURCE HAS SAID "THERE ISN'T REALLY ANYTHING, EXCEPT PERHAPS SOME MINOR SIGNAL ITEMS, THAT THE GERMAN ARMY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING FROM ISRAEL," AND THAT "VISITS AND MILITARY SALES AND PURCHASES ON THE PART OF THE FRG MAY NOT REALLY BE NECESSARY EXCEPT AS A MEANS OF SATISFYING AND IMPROVING THE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP." ISRAEL'S PRINCIPAL BENEFIT FROM THE IMPROVEMENT OF MILITARY CONTACTS RELATES TO HER INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING SOURCES FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY.

6. AS MANY GERMAN TOURISTS CAME TO ISRAEL IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1977 AS IN THE ENTIRE YEAR 1975, REPRESENT-

ING AN INCREASE OF 30 PERCENT OVER 1976. MANY YOUNG GERMANS COME TO ISRAEL TO WORK ON KIBBUTZIM AND A WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES EXISTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. WHILE NO GERMAN LANGUAGE FILMS ARE SHOWN ON TELEVISION BY THE ISRAELI BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (THE GOVERNMENT DENIES THAT THIS IS OFFICIAL POLICY) AND CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS HAVE NOT BEEN FORMALIZED BY THE ISRAELIS, CULTURAL TIES ARE EXTENSIVE IN SUCH AREAS AS DANCE, OPERA AND THEATRE GROUPS.

7. GERMANY RANKS SECOND TO THE UNITED STATES IN FOREIGN
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TRADE WITH ISRAEL. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF LONG-TERM LOANS HAS BEEN MAINTAINED AT A LEVEL OF 140 MILLION DM PER YEAR FOR THE PAST DECADE AND RESTITUTION PAYMENTS CURRENTLY AMOUNT TO BETWEEN 300 AND 400 MILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR. IN ORDER TO REDUCE A SUBSTANTIAL BALANCE OF TRADE SURPLUS GERMANY IS ASSISTING IN THE EXPANSION OF ISRAELI EXPORTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES TO GERMANY. GERMANY WANTS TO INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF ITS AID TIED TO SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. EXPANDED GERMAN INVESTMENTS IN ISRAEL, HOWEVER, FACE A PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE ARAB BOYCOTT, DEVALUATION AND INFLATION IN ISRAEL, AND SOME BAD EXPERIENCE IN JOINT VENTURES DUE TO ISRAELI LABOR DISPUTES.

8. THE KAPPLER AFFAIR: AS LONG AS GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY REMAINS VIABLE, THE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD WITHSTAND SUCH INCIDENTS AS THE KAPPLER AFFAIR AND CHARGES OF RESURGENT NAZISM IN THE FRG. (THIS MIGHT NOT BE THE CASE WITH A BORMANN OR MENGELE, BUT FRG GOVERNMENTS ARE UNLIKELY TO PLACE THEMSELVES ON A NO-WIN COURSE OVER LESS PROMINENT NAZIS.) ISRAELI PRESS WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE WAY THE BONN GOVERNMENT HANDLED THE MATTER, ALLEGING THAT "GERMANS CONTINUE TO SHIELD KAPPLER" AND THAT THE CASE IS FAST BECOMING A "TEST FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF NEW GERMANY'S PENITENCE OVER THE ABOMINATION OF HITLERISM." THE OFFICIAL RESPONSE REMAINED MILD BY COMPARISON AND THE OPPOSITION LABOR PARTY APOLOGIZED FOR A LETTER IT SENT TO THE SPD CRITICIZING SCHMIDT'S HANDLING OF THE AFFAIR.

9. WHILE ISRAEL WOULD LIKE TO SEE KAPPLER EXTRADITED OR RETRIED, BOTH PUBLIC AND OFFICIALS WERE MORE CONCERNED OVER THE REPORTED IGNORANCE OF YOUNG GERMANS IN REGARD TO HITLER. THE POTENTIAL HARM TO GERMANY IN THE CASE LIES IN THE FRG'S TARNISHING ITS RESPECT AND IMAGE, EVEN IF THE FORMAL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IS MAIN-
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TAINED. MUTUAL WILLINGNESS TO MAINTAIN THE FORM OF GOOD RELATIONS HAS BEEN NOTED IN THE MANNER IN WHICH OTHER INCIDENTS, WITH A POTENTIAL OF DISRUPTING RELATIONS, HAVE BEEN OVERCOME. EXAMPLES INCLUDE GERMAN RESTRAINT OVER ISRAELIS HOLDING INCOMMUNICADO FOR OVER A YEAR TWO GERMAN NATIONALS INVOLVED IN A PLAN TO HIJACK AN EL AL PLANE IN KENYA (SEE TEL AVIV 2385) AND GERMANY'S PATIENCE IN NOT PRESSING FOR FORMALIZATION OF CULTURAL AGREEMENTS. THE GOI HAS SHOWN RESTRAINT IN THE KAPPLER AFFAIR, IN REGARD TO THE PLO RESOLUTION OF THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS, AND IN NOT PUBLICLY REITERATING CRITICISM OF THE DUBLIN PAPER DURING FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER'S SUBSEQUENT VISIT TO ISRAEL. ALTHOUGH THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN BONN ATTACKED THE ISRAEL-GERMAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY FOR ITS YOUTH TOUR WHICH MET WITH COMMUNIST (RAKAH) PARTY MEMBERS AND PALESTINIAN ARABS IN ISRAEL, THE TWO GOVERNMENTS DID NOT LET THE INCIDENT DAMAGE RELATIONS -- BOTH GOVERNMENTS ARE WILLING TO SUBORDINATE SUCH INCIDENTS TO LARGER CONSIDERATIONS.

10. NEW GERMAN AMBASSADOR. ISRAELI-GERMAN RELATIONS SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED BY THE APPOINTMENT OF KLAUS SCHUETZ AS AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL, DUE TO SCHUETZ'S RECORD OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARD ISRAEL. ISRAELIS STILL TALK WITH RESPECT OF AMBASSADOR PAULS, THE FIRST GERMAN AMBASSADOR TWELVE YEARS AGO, WHOSE APPEAL WAS TRANSLATED INTO A

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RECOGNITION OF A "NEW GERMANY." THEY WERE LESS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SCHUETZ'S PREDECESSOR, PER FISCHER. SCHUETZ PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT KATZIR AUGUST 29. IN HIS REMARKS, THE NEW AMBASSADOR SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS PLEASED THAT MUTUAL TRUST AND RESPECT HAVE DEVELOPED "...DESPITE THE PAINFUL PAST." KATZIR ALLUDED TO THE KAPPLER CASE WHEN HE NOTED THAT SHADOWS OF THE PAST WILL ALWAYS REMAIN. THE POST EDITORIAL MENTIONED ABOVE REFERRED TO SCHETZ AS "...AN OLD AND STEADFAST FRIEND WHO WILL BE HEARTILY WELCOMED..."

11. THE NEW GOVERNMENT. WHILE HE WAS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, CONFIDENTIAL

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TION, MENAHEM BEGIN MADE HIS VIEW OF GERMANY AND GERMANS CLEAR, AND VOWED NEVER TO SET FOOT ON GERMAN SOIL OR SHAKE HANDS WITH A GERMAN. HE IS A MAN WITH A LONG MEMORY, AND WILL NOT OVERLOOK THE GERMAN ROLE IN THE HOLOCAUST AS HE APPEARS WILLING TO DO WITH THE BRITISH, WHOSE POLITICAL SYSTEM HE ADMIRES, FOR THEIR ROLE DURING THE MANDATE PERIOD (SEE TEL AVIV 3772). NONETHELESS, BEGIN HAS INDICATED THAT HE WILL CARRY OUT THE DUTIES OF HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IN AN APPROPRIATE MANNER AND WILL HONOR THE OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. ISRAELI PRESS REPORTED AFTER THE MAY ELECTION THAT "A SOURCE CLOSE TO MR. BEGIN HAS AFFIRMED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND GERMANY WILL NOT SUFFER AS A RESULT OF THE LIKUD ELECTION VICTORY." MOSHE DAYAN, WHO ATTENDED A GERMAN EMBASSY RECEPTION AFTER BEING APPOINTED FOREIGN MINISTER, SAID THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WOULD RECEIVE A NORMAL WELCOME SHOULD HE ACCEPT THE OUTSTANDING INVITATION EXTENDED TO HIM BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER RABIN. THERE ARE ALSO PLANS FOR FINANCE MINISTER SIMCHA EHRLICH TO VISIT GERMANY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

12. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE BEGIN AND SCHMIDT GOVERNMENTS WILL DEVELOP TO THE POINT OF THOSE

BETWEEN THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS BECAUSE THERE ARE NO
IDEOLOGICAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS SUCH AS EXISTED
BETWEEN THE LABOR PARTY AND THE SPD, WHICH SHARE MEMBER-
SHIP IN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL. IT IS ALSO DOUBTFUL,
DUE TO THE PERSONALITIES INVOLVED, THAT PERSONAL RELATION-
SHIPS WILL BE CREATED SIMILAR TO THOSE WHICH EXISTED
BETWEEN SCHMIDT AND RABIN OR GENSCHER AND ALLON. NEVERTHE-
LESS SEEN FROM HERE IT APPEARS THAT NEITHER THE SPD NOR
THE CDU OPPOSITION WOULD BE LIKELY TO HEDGE ON SUPPORT
FOR ISRAEL. IN THE NEAR FUTURE, IT WOULD APPEAR UNLIKELY
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THAT ANY GERMAN GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE OF THE NAZI
PAST, WOULD ATTEMPT TO DO SO AND IF IT DID SO, ANY ISRAELI
GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO PLAY ON THE PAST TO HEAD OFF
SUCH A MOVE. OVER THE LONGER TERM, AS THE OLDER GENERA-
TION OF ISRAELIS DISAPPEARS AND AS THE DEMOGRAPHIC BAL-
ANCE SHIFTS FROM ASHKENAZI TO SEPHARDIC JEWS AND INTEREST
IN RECENT EUROPEAN HISTORY DECREASES, GERMAN/ISRAELI
RELATIONS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BECOME MORE NORMAL AND
LESS EMOTIONAL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, REPORTS, FUGITIVES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TELAV06613
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770320-0050
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770998/aaaaderz.tel
Line Count: 412
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BONN 13629, 77 TEL AVIV 6331
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1388355
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAEL AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PDIP, GE, IS, (KAPPLER, HERBERT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d539fb4d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009